

# THE SENTRY

Wilfred Owen

a poem

written 1917

published posthumously in *Poems by Wilfred Owen*, page 16  
by London: Chatto & Windus, 1920; New York Viking Press, 1921

THE  
PROUD READER™

[theproudreader.com](http://theproudreader.com)

©2022 Keygen Ltd LLC

WE'D found an old Boche dug-out, and he knew,  
And gave us hell, for shell on frantic shell  
Hammered on top, but never quite burst through.  
Rain, guttering down in waterfalls of slime  
Kept slush waist high, that rising hour by hour,  
Choked up the steps too thick with clay to climb.  
What murk of air remained stank old, and sour  
With fumes of whizz-bangs, and the smell of men  
Who'd lived there years, and left their curse in the den,  
If not their corpses. . . .

                  There we herded from the blast  
Of whizz-bangs, but one found our door at last.  
Buffeting eyes and breath, snuffing the candles.  
And thud! flump! thud! down the steep steps came thumping  
And splashing in the flood, deluging muck—  
The sentry's body ; then his rifle, handles  
Of old Boche bombs, and mud in ruck on ruck.  
We dredged him up, for killed, until he whined  
"O sir, my eyes—I'm blind—I'm blind, I'm blind!"  
Coaxing, I held a flame against his lids  
And said if he could see the least blurred light  
He was not blind; in time he'd get all right.  
"I can't," he sobbed. Eyeballs, huge-bulged like squids  
Watch my dreams still; but I forgot him there  
In posting next for duty, and sending a scout  
To beg a stretcher somewhere, and floundering about  
To other posts under the shrieking air.

Those other wretches, how they bled and spewed,  
And one who would have drowned himself for good,—  
I try not to remember these things now.  
Let dread hark back for one word only: how  
Half-listening to that sentry's moans and jumps,  
And the wild chattering of his broken teeth,  
Renewed most horribly whenever crumps  
Pummelled the roof and slogged the air beneath—  
Through the dense din, I say, we heard him shout  
"I see your lights!" But ours had long died out.



This document is released under the  
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license.

The written work contained in this document is in the public domain.  
You are free to copy its text and reuse it without permission.

You are free to share this document in its entirety—be it in print or digitally—  
but you are not authorized to modify it, sell it, or use it in any way commercially.

For more written works and free audiobooks, visit our website,  
and follow us at the social media sites below.

## Official Website

---

[theproudreader.com](http://theproudreader.com)

## Listen to The Proud Reader

---

YouTube: [youtube.com/channel/UCHnUg4W9wkn2ISDoCxucd\\_A](https://youtube.com/channel/UCHnUg4W9wkn2ISDoCxucd_A)

Bitchute: [bitchute.com/theproudreader](https://bitchute.com/theproudreader)

Rumble: [rumble.com/c/TheProudReader](https://rumble.com/c/TheProudReader)

Odysee: [odysee.com/@TheProudReader:c](https://odysee.com/@TheProudReader:c)

## Follow The Proud Reader

---

Minds: [minds.com/theProudReader](https://minds.com/theProudReader)

Gab: [gab.com/theProudReader](https://gab.com/theProudReader)

Parler: [parler.com/TheProudReader](https://parler.com/TheProudReader)

Twitter: [twitter.com/TheProudReader](https://twitter.com/TheProudReader)

## Subscribe & Donate

---

Patreon: [patreon.com/theproudreader](https://patreon.com/theproudreader)

SubscribeStar: [subscribestar.com/theproudreader](https://subscribestar.com/theproudreader)

PayPal: [paypal.com/biz/fund?id=5GFSVWEHUPK66](https://paypal.com/biz/fund?id=5GFSVWEHUPK66)